

Sutton United 0, Wycombe Wanderers 1

AFTER SPENDING 85 minutes concentrating on defence, Wycombe Wanderers snatched both points from Sutton on Saturday in a lightning smash and grab raid. Sutton frustrated by their lack of success, became more careless at the back as the game progressed, and Wycombe's waiting policy was to be justified.

With a 4-3-3 formation Wanderers clearly arrived committed to defence. The object of the exercise was to gain a point but if the opportunity arose the plan had to cater for seizing both points and this it did!

Three of Wanderers' key players were unavailable, with the result that a defensive shuffle was made to allow Dave Thomas to go to right back and Stuart Thompson, coming into the middle three, for his first senior game of the season.

Wanderers' three front runners Busby, Horseman and Honeyman made little impression against the Sutton defence until after the break, when Sutton visibly began to panic at being unable to break down the Wycombe defensive barrier.

Rundle stars

Outstanding players in Wycombe's rearguard action were Dave Thomas, who enjoyed his best game for the club since returning to Maidenhead, and Ian Rundle at centre-half, who kept a very watchful eye on Sutton's 6 ft. 4 inch leader, Dave Hutchins.

Without a doubt this was a disappointing display from Sutton. They lacked inventiveness in their approach work and displayed a new tendency in their play, by always pushing the ball back.

However, all credit should go to Wanderers for containing a Sutton forward line which included two England internationals in Laurie Pritchard and Terry Howard.

A great proportion of the game was conducted in mid-field where both teams cancelled each other out, but this certainly suited Wycombe with players funnelling back to meet every fresh Sutton assault.

Only Bladon, of Sutton's forwards, appeared to have the confidence to keep possession and he was unlucky with one fine run when, shrugging off challenges from Thomas and Baker, his 20-yard drive grazed the bar on the way over.

Some five minutes before the interval, Groves and Horseman clashed heads contesting a cross and Horseman was led off the field with blood seeping from a cut.

Tony back

Horseman resumed after the interval and came close to putting Wycombe ahead. From a free-kick he curled a vicious shot around the defensive wall only for 'keeper Roffey to pull

off a spectacular flying one-handed save.

The referee's handling of the game left a lot to be desired. He displayed a complete ignorance of the advantage rule and often halted play when Sutton were in promising positions.

As the second stage progressed Wanderers became more confident and started to open up. Thompson worked hard in mid-field while Samuels drove his men on often coming back to give support in his own penalty area when Sutton won corners.

Sutton, alarmed at their failure to break through, became more careless and paid the penalty in the 85th minute. Samuels' low cross was picked up inside the box by Busby, who eluded Grose's tackle, and by shooting past the stranded Roffey, into the left-hand corner made his one effective contribution to the match.

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WYCOMBE FOUND Sutton strangely lethargic and an 85th-minute goal was enough to take both Isthmian League points. Wycombe dithered for a long time, and it was only in the last 20 minutes that they really began to look like potential winners.

They were weakened for a while when inside-left Tony Horseman was having a cut head patched up. But five minutes from the end, Busby nipped in and sent home a Samuels cross.